adequate communication equipments. The subject matter of enhanced safety measures in operation of barges is under active consideration of the Directorate General of Shipping. These measures are aimed at enhancing safety in the operation of barges.

Fire at Chennai Port

4605. SHRIMATI VANGA GEETHA: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a major fire occured in the Chennai port, recently;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) the amount of loss estimated by Government due to this fire; and

(d) the steps being taken by Government to prevent such fire in the ports across the country?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) and (b) A small fire occured in the heaps of coal yard at about 8.00 PM on 22.02.2005 in the Chennai Port Trust because of spontaneous ignition of coal in the coal yard due to friction, temperature and wind.

(c) The estimated amount of loss is Rs. 2,35,200.

(d) Depending on their requirements, every major port has developed its own fire safety plan and fire fighting system. Such plan *inter-alia* includes fire patrolling, periodic drills, regular maintenance of fire fighting equipments etc. aimed at preventing occurence of fire at major ports.

Development of roads in Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh

†4606. SHRI DILIP SINGH JUDEV: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the amount spent annually on widening, new construction and improvement (PR) during the last three years under National Highways and Corridor Construction Scheme in Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh;

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.